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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

NIGER
POST REPORT

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This is the official post report prepared by the post. The information contained herein is directed to official US Government employees and their families. Any other information concerning the facts as set forth herein is to be regarded as unofficial information.

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Cover: Tuareg honor guard.

The Host Country

AREA, GEOGRAPHY, AND CLIMATE

The Republic of Niger covers an area of 1,268,550 square kilometers (490,000 sq. mi.) and is larger than Texas and California combined. Landlocked, it is bordered by seven states: Algeria and Libya to the north, Chad to the east, Nigeria and Benin to the south, Upper Volta to the southwest, and Mali to the west. Niger is the heart of the Sahel, the transitional zone between the tropical west African coast and the Sahara Desert. Northern Niger contains the Sahara—vast expanses of rocky, sandy wilderness broken only by occasional oases. In north-central Niger and its northeast corner are found the Air and Djado massifs with their peaks rising to 1,850 meters (6,000 ft.). The south, below the 16th parallel, is an arable savannah. The Niger River, the 12th longest in the world and the third largest river of Africa, flows for 483 kilometers (300 mi.) through the southwest pedicle. It provides much of the flavor and folklore of Niger's capital city, Niamey, which has a population of about 230,000.

Niamey's climate varies with distinct seasons. April and May are the hottest with noontime temperatures rising above 43°C (105°F) in the shade. Direct sunlight is intense during this period and at night temperatures remain in the upper 20s°C (80s°F).

In May, the first rains come to the parched landscape, and with them the planting of millet and sorghum, both major food crops. Niamey receives an average of 55.8 centimeters (22 in.) of rainfall between May and September, normally in short, torrential downpours preceded by high winds and dust or sandstorms. The surrounding country at this time takes on a verdant hue as the crops and the native grasses cover it.

The rainy season is followed by a short period of hot, humid weather during October. Temperatures rise to a maximum of 43°C (105°F), and drop to a minimum of 22°C (75°F).

From November to March the weather is dry and pleasant. During this season, clear days are interspersed with hazy and lightly overcast skies caused by the "harmattan," a hot, dry wind carrying dust from the Sahara. Normally the winds stay at high altitudes creating slightly overcast skies. However, the harmattan occasionally causes localized dust storms, not unlike those which occurred in the Great Plains of the US during the 1930s.

POPULATION

An estimated 5 million people live in Niger. The Hausa, whose territory extends into northern Nigeria, predominate in the eastern portion of Niger and comprise about 50% of the country's population. The Djerma, another large tribe, were traditionally knights, administrators, and warriors. They are an ethnic subgroup of the Songhai people whose great kingdom in the 14th and 15th centuries embraced what is now eastern Mali and western Niger. Because Niger's capital city is situated in their tribal homeland, the Djerma influence has been strong in the central government, especially since independence. The Fulanis (called Peuls in French), Tuaregs, and Beri-Beri (also known as Kanouri and located in the Lake Chad region) are the next largest population groups. The lithe, stately Fulani and light-skinned Tuaregs are typically seminomadic herdsmen.

About 90% of Niger's people live within 161 kilometers (100 mi.) of the country's southern border. In addition to Niamey, four cities have populations over 20,000: Maradi, Zinder, Agadez, and Tahoua. Except for Agadez, these cities are close to the southern border.

More than 90% of Nigeriens live in rural areas away from good roads. Over 75% are subsistence farmers who grow millet and sorghum for food crops, and peanuts, cotton, or cowpeas for cash crops.

Although French is the official and administrative language of the country, Hausa and Djerma also are widely spoken. English is a required language in secondary schools and a well-educated Nigerien will have at least a thin veneer of English comprehension. However, French is needed for shopping, social life, and most professional contacts.

The people are Muslim and religion is the dominant force in their daily lives. A sense of tradition, fatalism, strong family connections, and consideration and tolerance for others characterize the typical Nigerien's approach to the world. Polygamy is practiced widely and families generally are large. In spite of the high infant mortality rate and low life expectancy (37 years), Niger's population is growing at about 3% a year.

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

The constitution of the Republic of Niger, adopted in 1960, was suspended following a military coup d'etat in April 1974. The country is presently governed by a Supreme Military Council, with the President of the Council serving as Chief of State. Cabinet members are drawn from both the military and civilian spheres. At present, 5 military and 12 civilians serve as ministers. The French-style judicial system continues to function for almost all criminal and civil litigation.

Niger is divided into seven Departments which are subdivided into 32 districts called "arrondissements." Prefects and subprefects administer these units and are appointed by the central government. All but one prefect are military officers. The government sets

guidelines and participates, at least indirectly, in all significant business and economic ventures. It operates as a partner with private companies, however, and strongly encourages private initiative and investment.

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Niger's gross domestic product in 1978 was an estimated $1.65 billion, or about $267 per capita. The country continues to recover from a prolonged drought which was particularly devastating to agriculture and livestock, activities which occupy 90% of the population.

Although ranked among the world's 25 poorest countries, Niger's economic outlook is improving. With sufficient rain from May to September, and successful pest control, agricultural production has risen to above predrought levels. Millet and sorghum are the chief staples, cash crops include peanuts, cotton, gum arabic, sesame and, recently, cowpeas.

Peanut production, once the source of more than 50% of Niger's recorded export earnings, fell drastically during the drought. It now represents less than 5% of total export earnings.

Niger's livestock production is gradually recovering from the drought. Small ruminants have reached predrought numbers and cattle are estimated at about 70% of their predrought levels.

Uranium mining has provided the major stimulus to Niger's economy since 1971. Estimated reserves are over 80,000 metric tons—the largest in sub-Saharan Africa. Current production is over 3,000 metric tons but this figure will probably double in the early 1980s. Uranium accounts for 75% of export earnings and about 45% of the budget.

Other mineral exploitation in Niger is limited to mining limestone and gypsum for the country's single cement plant; coal mining near Agadez; and small-scale mining of salt, phosphate, and cassiterite (a source of tin). Large deposits of iron ore and phosphates have been discovered near Say and Park W, southeast of Niamey. A coal mine will provide the energy for a power plant in the Agadez region by 1981. Exploration for petroleum has been underway intermittently since the mid-1970s.

France and Nigeria are Niger's major trading partners. France accounts for over 40% of Niger's imports and over 50% of its exports.

Niger receives foreign aid from many donors, including France, the FRG, Canada, the US, China, Saudi Arabia, the European Development Fund, the World Bank, and UN agencies. Most of these international donors coordinate their efforts through regional organizations such as CILSS and the Club du Sahel, with a view to the long-term development of the Sahel.

Niger is a member of the West African franc zone and an associated state of the European Common Market.

TRANSPORTATION

Automobiles

A private car is a must for shopping in town, attending social functions, and for trips outside Niamey. Small cars are the most practical. The post is allowed shipment of foreign cars on travel orders. Cars may be purchased locally but such orders include high interior transportation costs and may entail long waits for certain makes. A good market exists for used vehicles.

Most passenger cars in Niamey are European or Japanese makes. Peugeot, Renault, and Toyota are popular. Few American passenger cars are found in Niger. Chrysler, International Harvester, and GM agencies operate in Niamey, but they specialize in truck sales and servicing. Almost all spare parts for American cars must come from the US. Since few repair facilities for tubeless tires exist, bring tires equipped with tubes. At present, post personnel can buy super gasoline (equivalent in octane to US regular) duty free at about $2.20 a gallon. No lead-free gas is available.

Roads are rough and dusty. Car options such as air-conditioning, heavy-duty suspension, oil-bath air filters, and oversize tires are recommended. Bring a set of basic tools and spare parts, as well as a service manual (in English, if you are mechanically inclined, or in French, if you plan to have the work done locally). Woven cushions greatly decrease the discomfort of driving in the heat of the day and should be sent with household effects. If possible, avoid shipping a car with plastic seat covers.

Members of the Mission (State, AID, USICA, Peace Corps staff) are allowed to import one car per family duty free. The Administrative Section will handle car registration when you arrive in Niamey. Bring proof of ownership which includes the purchase price of the vehicle—a bill of sale is preferred. A valid drivers license—American, European, or international—is required to obtain a Nigerien permit. A license in standard international form is useful as it already is translated into French. Any license submitted is retained by the host government and is not always retrievable upon final departure from post. Many prefer to submit other than their American license, which might be required while on trips to the U.S.

Post policy requires all drivers to have third-party liability and property damage insurance. This is obtained locally for about $150 a year. Comprehensive and fire and theft also are available through local agents, although very expensive.

For sales of cars outside the diplomatic community, the post reports the sale to the Foreign Office, giving the name of the seller, the purchaser, and sales price. The Foreign Office then notifies the Bureau of Customs which then collects the appropriate duties from the buyer.

Local

Taxis are the only convenient means of public transportation in Niamey. They are generally obtainable and inexpensive—a flat fee within Niamey of 100 CFA. However, it is difficult to use taxis in residential areas, since no house numbers exist and only a few street names are posted. For short visits, negotiate the price and have the driver wait. Cabs cannot be called by telephone. City buses are overcrowded and generally not used by foreigners.

Regional

Scheduled air service is available to Niger's important towns (Tahoua, Maradi, Zinder, and Agadez), to capitals of neighboring countries (Cotonou, Abidjan, Ouagadougou,

Bamako, Lome, Lagos, Algiers, and Dakar), and to Europe (Marseilles, Bordeaux, and Paris). Niamey is 5 hours flying time from Paris. Major airlines operating in Niger include UTA, Air Afrique, and Air Algerie. Air travel is expensive: A ticket to Paris costs almost 60% more than the fare from Paris to New York.

Niger's road network totaling 7,657 kilometers (4,759 mi.) is still rudimentary, and only about 1,610 kilometers (1,000 mi.) of paved inter-urban roads exist in the country. A paved road extends from Niamey to Lake Chad with the exception of about 200 kilometers (124 mi.) near Zinder which is currently under construction. A second major paved road links Niamey with Agadez and eventually the mining region of Arlit. This road is about three-quarters completed. Major road construction is in progress or in advance planning stages in several areas. Unpaved road surfaces are generally poor. Stretches of washboard roughness alternate with drifted sand and dirt, and some sections are inaccessible for part of the rainy season. Niamey itself has good paved roads linking all sections of the city, although houses off the main thoroughfares in some sections are located on dirt roads.

COMMUNICATIONS

Telephone and Telegraph

Niamey has reasonably good telephone and telegraph facilities. Long-distance calls from the US, however, may take several hours to complete and the quality of reception can be uncertain (improvements are underway). A short call to the eastern US costs about $50. A dial system works reasonably well within Niamey. Only about half of government-furnished quarters have telephones. New installations are hard to obtain.

Mail and Pouch

APO facilities are not available in Niamey.

International airmail letters to or from the US east coast take from 6 to 10 days and cost 31¢ from the US to Niamey, and about 55¢ from Niamey to the US, for each half-ounce. International parcel post can be used for packages and magazines but service is unreliable. Use the following address:

(Name)
American Embassy
Boite Postale 11201
Niamey, Niger
West Africa

Air pouch service provides two scheduled pouches a week from Washington. Letter mail carrying US postage is accepted by the Department for air pouch transmission. Post personnel can use the air pouch for outgoing letters to be placed in the US postal system, affixing US postage at the first-class rate. Bring an adequate supply of American stamps as they cannot be purchased locally. Use the following address:

(Name)
Niamey
Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

For AID and USICA personnel, add (ID) and (USICA) respectively after Niamey in the address.

Packages weighing less than 18.14 kilograms (40 lbs.) may be sent to Niamey via surface-to-air pouch. These packages cannot exceed the dimensions of 61 centimeters (24 in.) in length and 157.5 centimeters (62 in.) in length and girth combined. This service is available to direct-hire personnel only.

Packages may not be sent from post to the US through the pouch except for items of wearing apparel returned for exchange which were manufactured and purchased in the US from stores or supply houses, or were received as gifts from friends or relatives during the employee's current tour of duty. They may not be items contained in a shipment of effects.

Radio and TV

Radio Niger (ORTN) broadcasts in French and in local languages in the morning, at noon, and in the evening on four channels, medium and shortwave. VOA reception is good, as is that of European and neighboring African countries broadcasting on shortwave. Battery-operated radios may be used, but others must operate on 220v current or have stepdown transformers. Imported European radios are available in Niamey at prices considerably higher than those in the US.

The Nigerien Government operates a single-channel national TV network four evenings a week. Most of the programs are of the educational variety and are broadcast in the various languages spoken in the country. Each day's program normally includes one film or sports event of French origin. US-manufactured TV sets will not operate in Niger.

All stereo equipment and video tape machines should be adjusted to operate on 50 Hz. This should be done in the US.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

The government publishes a daily paper that covers local and selected international news. Most well-known international periodicals can be bought in Niamey including *Time, Newsweek, Le Monde,* and the *International Herald Tribune.* The post and USICA subscribe to several American periodicals; these are available at the Embassy for staff use or at the American Cultural Center Library.

HEALTH AND MEDICINE

Medical Facilities

The Niger Government operates a hospital in Niamey. Surgeons and other senior medical staff attached to the hospital are competent, but, overall, the hospital does not meet minimum American standards. All post personnel belong to Gamkalley, a small private clinic under a group contract. Obstetrical facilities are marginal in Niamey and neonatal care is unsatisfactory. The Embassy Health Unit contains the standard items for emergency use. A State Department nurse and a Peace Corps doctor are assigned to Niamey. For serious illnesses and emergencies, the Embassy will evacuate personnel and dependents to American hospitals in Europe.

Three dentists at Niamey's hospital have given emergency service to post personnel. No facilities exist for American-style orthodontics or bridge work, nor for treatment of periodontal disease. Americans have flown to Abidjan and Dakar for dental care. American missionary dentists practice in Benin, Ghana, Ivory Coast, and Nigeria. Travel for dental care is expen-

sive and not at government expense. All major and preventive dental work should be completed before arrival at post.

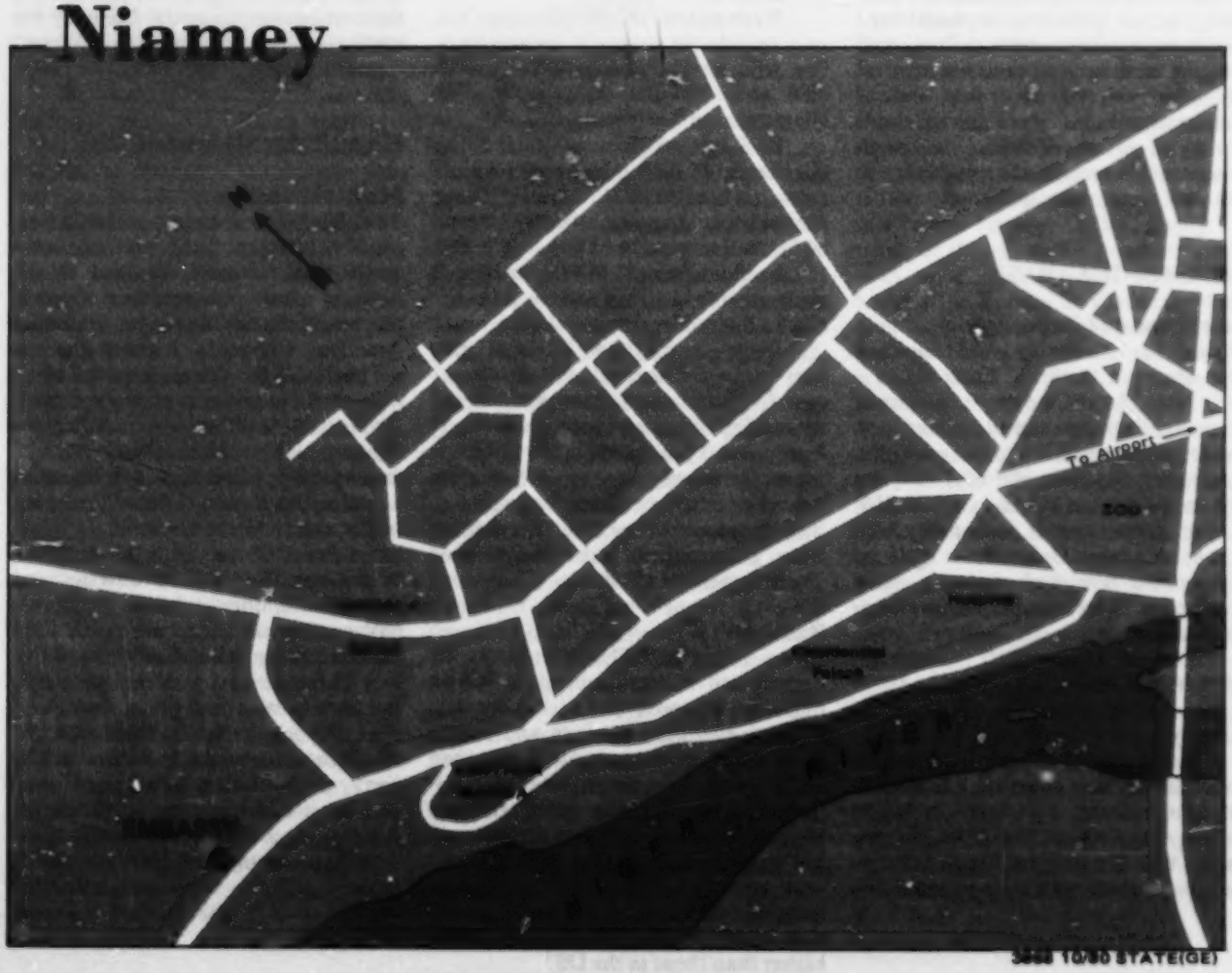
Most diseases common to this part of the world are found in Niger. The following are the more serious: hepatitis, amoebic and bacillary dysentery, malaria, measles, tuberculosis, meningitis, schistosomiasis, conjunctivitis, and skin infections. Respiratory infections and allergies are a continuing problem because of the dust. The following immunizations are required before leaving for post: yellow fever, typhoid, cholera, and polio. Although the US Public Health Service lists Niger as no longer requiring small pox vaccinations, the health personnel at the airport were still insisting on it as of this writing. Gamma globulin is strongly recommended. You should also have yearly tuberculin skin tests. All vaccinations should be up-to-date before coming to post. Malaria suppressives are a necessity and should be taken beginning 2 weeks before arrival, continued for the duration of the tour, during any travel, and for 6 weeks after final departure from the area. Aralen, recommended by the Department of State Medical Division, is available at post.

Niamey has an excellent water treatment plant, however, the distribution system is not considered adequate. Water should be purified with tablets or boiled and filtered before use. Raw fruits and vegetables should be soaked in an iodine solution and rinsed with boiled water before eating. All local meats should be well cooked.

Personnel assigned to this post should be in good physical condition. Persons with heart disease, diabetes, or asthma should be aware that facilities are completely inadequate to manage any acute exacerbation of their condition.

EMPLOYMENT FOR SPOUSES AND DEPENDENTS

A variety of jobs, mostly within the Mission, are occasionally available. French and/or typing is usually desired. These positions typically are secretarial, clerical, or teaching. Jobs on the local economy are difficult to arrange. Interested dependents should send a completed skills talent bank form to the Personnel Office. (Forms are available in Washington from M/FLO.)



American Embassy

NIAMEY

Niamey, capital and principal city of Niger, is on the southwest corner of the country on the left bank of the Niger River. Since its selection as capital in 1925, its population has grown from 8,000 to almost 230,000. The city's 3,000 Europeans, mostly French, are in government administration and business. Niamey covers 15.5 square kilometers (6 sq. mi.) and forms a triangle which borders the river. Many trees give the city a greenness that contrasts with the general aridity of the surrounding countryside.

THE POST AND ITS ADMINISTRATION

The post consists of members of the Department of State, AID, USICA, and Peace Corps staff, plus a small Marine Guard contingent (about 130 US Government personnel and dependents). The AID Mission to Niger has a program which concentrates on the areas of rainfed agriculture, livestock and range management, forestry, public health, and human resources development. AID is the largest Agency with about 50 employees. USICA operates a Cultural Center that contains a small library, exhibit room, and film section; it publishes a weekly bulletin and sponsors English-language classes and cultural presentations. Over 100 Peace Corps Volunteers work in such diverse fields as English-language instruction, public health, agriculture, range management, and pest control.

The Embassy performs normal diplomatic and consular functions and provides administrative support for all Agencies through a Joint Administrative Office.

Embassy telephone numbers are 72-26-61/62/63. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8 am to noon and 2 pm to 6 pm. A Marine Security Guard is on duty 24 hours daily, 7 days a week. Embassy and principal AID offices are located in a modern Chancery on the edge of town. The USICA Cultural Center and the Peace Corps office are located downtown.

HOUSING

Temporary Quarters

Newcomers are usually housed in government-leased quarters, either temporarily or permanently, as soon as they arrive. On rare occasions, however, they may have to spend a few nights in a hotel. Niamey has six hotels, of which five—the Grand Hotel, the Sahel, the Terminus, the Tenere, and Les Roniers—offer reasonable standards of comfort and service. The Grand and the Sahel are situated on a bluff overlooking the Niger River and have attractive terraces, dining rooms, outdoor dining courtyards, and bars. The rooms are small and rather plain, but each is air-conditioned. Les Roniers has air-conditioned bungalows built in the traditional shape of a Hausa hut; but the hotel is out of town and transportation is a problem. The sixth hotel, the Rivoli, offers less comfortable rooms and is used by the post only when other accommodations cannot be made. A single room at these hotels averages $35 a night, and dinner about $20 with beverage. A new, large, international class hotel is under construction and should open in calendar year 1982.

Permanent Housing

Personnel assigned to Niamey are provided with government-leased and -furnished housing. Most post personnel occupy quarters that are no more than 5 minutes by car from the Embassy. Most are of similar design and consist of three or four bedrooms, a living room of moderate size, dining room, kitchen, bath(s), and a small terrace. No quarters are shared and no staff apartments exist in Niamey.

Furnishings

All government-leased quarters are provided with basic furniture, including lamps. Special items, such as baby furniture, are not supplied, nor can they generally be found in the city. Curtains and drapes are furnished if desired. Rugs are usually provided for living and dining rooms; since all floors are tiled, rugs in all rooms are not considered necessary. Furnishings also include pillows, ironing boards (no pads or covers provided), white shower curtains, water filters, garbage cans, garden tools and hoses, lawn mowers, stepladders and stepstools, and two transformers in addition to those supplied with government-issued appliances.

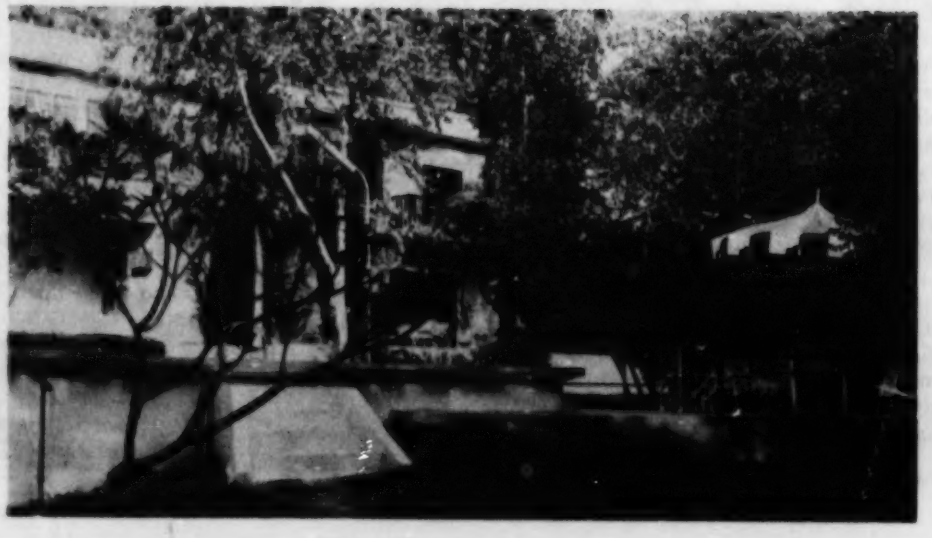
The post's hospitality kit, which includes basic linens, kitchen utensils, and table service, is provided to newcomers until their airfreight arrives. Airfreight shipments should include a selection of bath, table, and bed linens; an electric iron; pots and pans; and other utensils.

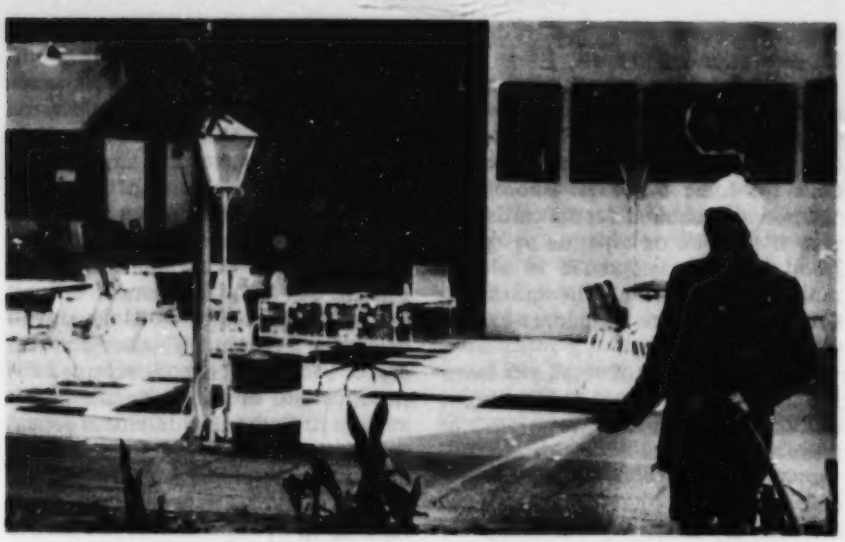
In addition to basic furnishings and equipment, each house has a butane gas stove, electric refrigerator, washer, dryer, freezer, and veranda furniture. Bedrooms and living-dining room areas are air-conditioned. Electric current in Niamey is 220v, 50 Hz. Bring as many 220v, 50-Hz appliances as possible. These can be purchased at special stores in the US (General Electronics, Inc., in Washington). Step-down transformers are necessary for regular 110v, 60-Hz American appliances. The two Embassy-supplied transformers are sufficient for most households, but those having extraordinary requirements should bring additional transformers to post. An American stereo or tape deck must be converted from 60 Hz to operate on 50 Hz; this should be done before coming to Niamey.

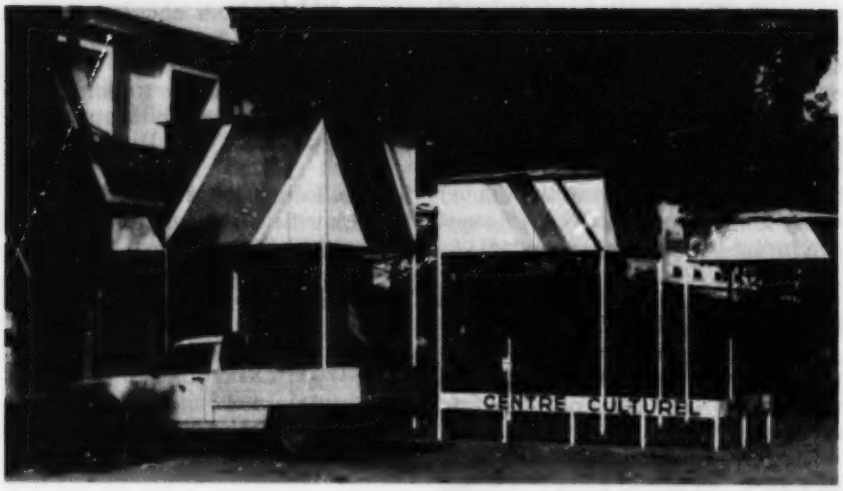
Other items suggested for inclusion in household effects are: humidifiers or vaporizers for bedrooms, a large pot for boiling water, throw rugs, wastebaskets, two 220v irons, adapter

READEX FICHE

Clockwise from lower left: DCM's residence; Ambassador's residence; the Embassy/AID Office Building; the American Recreation Association; and the American Cultural Center.







plugs for American appliances, mattress pads, dish drainers, and an oven thermometer. Light-weight blankets are needed during the cool season. Vacuum cleaners are not furnished.

Additional items which are useful include card table sets, a blender, an ice cream freezer, and an artificial Christmas tree, all of which are extremely expensive locally.

FOOD

The local markets and grocery stores offer a good variety of fresh fruits and vegetables in season, canned goods, dairy products, and wines. During several months of the year, fresh fruits and vegetables are imported. Because of transportation costs (airfreight for all fresh items) and high markup, imported merchandise is expensive—generally three times the cost of comparable items in the US. Baby foods are limited and most Americans prepare their own. Beer, Coca-Cola, Sprite, Fanta, and soda and quinine water are bottled locally.

Local beef, veal, pork, and lamb are plentiful; small and tough chickens also are available. A delicious local white fish, "capitaine," is available seasonally at about $4 per pound. Bakeries sell bread and a limited selection of pastries. Packaged crackers are available but do not keep unless stored in tins. Cheeses, pates, and other French specialties are plentiful but expensive.

Personnel assigned to Niamey are authorized a special consumables allowance. Use your entire weight allowance to bring as much as possible of your food requirements to post. These items when available locally are expensive, and the quality and selection limited.

CLOTHING

General. Bring an ample supply of clothing to Niamey, as frequent washing and strong sunlight take a heavy toll of wardrobes. Shoes and sneakers also tend to wear out quickly. Clothing selections should be made bearing in mind the informal dress standards of the community and the hot climate. Although one drycleaner is in operation, the quality of service and high cost prohibit frequent drycleaning. Therefore, bring only washable fabrics. Cotton is a good choice as it feels cooler.

A wardrobe should take into account seasonal variations. Despite fairly high daytime temperatures during the cool season (November-February), evening temperatures sometimes drop low enough to require sweaters or light jackets. Bring all sports clothes with you since the local supply is limited and expensive. More than one bathing suit will probably be necessary. Also bring some winter clothing for trips to the US or Europe during winter months.

Men. Sports attire worn in the US is the dress for the office and most social occasions. Jackets and neckties are rarely worn in the office, but are worn at official and some diplomatic functions. Formal dinner clothes are rarely worn and most men, except senior officers, can get by without them. Safari suits are frequently worn.

Women. A 2-year supply of washable summer clothing is recommended. Hats and gloves are never worn. Except at the senior level, most women probably will not need a formal gown, but casual long dresses are popular, as are short evening dresses. Stockings are rarely worn, even during the cool season. Jeans, pantsuits, and slacks are worn rather infrequently by American and European women. Shorts are worn

around home, but not in town. Wrap-around skirts are comfortable and easy to take care of.

Local tailors do satisfactory work on simple dresses and men's safari-type suits. A variety of imported and local fabrics is available, the latter being particularly popular for casual clothing. Thread and other notions can be found, but their quality is not the best—bring a supply of these items to post. A sewing machine is useful here.

Children. A generous supply of normal summer clothing is suggested. The original supply can be supplemented through mail-order houses in the U.S. Normal delivery by surface/air pouch takes from 4 to 6 weeks. Smaller children may require several changes of clothing each day because of heat and dust. Young boys wear shorts rather than long pants most of the year. Bedrooms are air-conditioned so bring warm pajamas.

Although some shoes are available in local stores, bring a sufficient quantity for the tour. Sandals are sold at reasonable prices and small children wear them exclusively. Good quality tennis shoes are sometimes available, but not always in all sizes and at higher-than-US prices.

SUPPLIES AND SERVICES

Supplies

Small household and personal articles are much less expensive if shipped from the US. American brand cosmetics and hair preparations are not available locally. Bring a supply of favorite soaps, shampoos, toiletries, vitamins, home medicines, and insect repellants.

Dry skin lotion is a must during the dry season. Items of individual interest—books, records, tennis rackets and balls, cameras, films, tapes, recording accessories—are recommended.

Camera film, both color and black and white, is sold locally. It is expensive, however, and should be brought or ordered from the US. Black-and-white developing and printing can be done here but is also expensive and quality is not the best. Color film must be sent to Europe or the US and takes about 4 to 6 weeks for processing and delivery. Many have found it convenient to buy prepaid mailers in the US before coming to post.

Each adult arriving at post needs about two dozen black-and-white photos for ID cards, drivers license, and visas; color photos are not acceptable for some purposes. Photos for children are required for ID cards and visas if they are on separate passports from their parents; about 10 photos should be sufficient. The maximum size is 3.8 centimeters square (1-1/2 in. sq.).

Bring a supply of small gift items for all ages, to be used at Christmas, birthdays, and special occasions, as these are not available locally.

Domestic Help

Servants are available, but many are not trained in the American way of operating. They are almost exclusively male and do not live in. Single persons and childless couples generally employ one domestic for about $120-$130 a month. Depending on needs, a cook, laundryman, or gardener may also be hired. The employer is required by local law to pay 17% of the annual salary to the Niger Social Security system for each domestic employed.

RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

Most Nigeriens are Muslim, but the Catholic church and one American missionary Protestant church hold services in French, and a single weekly English service is held at the Protestant church. The Protestant church also operates a small Sunday school for children. There is no synagogue in Niamey.

EDUCATION

Dependent Education

At Post. Local schools, operating under the French system, have grades 1-12. French is the language of instruction.

The Lycee National, the Lycee Kassai, and College Issa Beri are government schools of good quality, but no Americans and few foreign children attend them.

Cours La Fontaine, a privately run French-language school in Niamey, is staffed with competent teachers, many of whom are subsidized by the French Ministry of Cooperation. It has classes from kindergarten through the equivalent of the 12th grade. About 1,100 children of various nationalities currently attend the school, of which about 75% are French. All US Government school-age children resident in Niamey attend Cours La Fontaine. The Baccalaureat degree earned in Niger is accepted for entrance into French universities. Admission to Cours La Fontaine is dependent upon space availability which is determined after all French students are enrolled. Please notify the post as far in advance as possible if you plan to enroll your children, and furnish the dates of their birth and French language capability. Supplemental educational allowance funds are available for intensive language training and children seem to readily adapt to the learning process.

Special Educational Opportunities

Modern ballet classes and folk dancing are available for children. Classes in horseback riding and jumping for beginners and advanced riders are given at the riding clubs. Private tennis lessons are available.

RECREATION AND SOCIAL LIFE

Sports

The Embassy Recreation Association maintains a recreation area with snack-bar, swimming pool, tennis and volleyball courts (lighted at night), children's pool and swings, and table tennis facilities. An active softball group has weekly games.

Private clubs in Niamey have facilities for bridge, tennis, swimming, and riding. The Embassy has a small golf course with sand fairways and greens, but it is in disrepair due to lack of use.

Good horses can be purchased at reasonable prices and boarded at one of the riding clubs for about $100 a month. The riding style is European and riders must provide their own tack—a very expensive item if purchased locally.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Though no real change of climate and scenery can be found within a day's drive of Niamey, some interesting excursions can be made by car or plane.

Park W is a game reserve flanked by areas in Upper Volta and Benin. Within the park and nearby Arly and Penjari Parks are four camps which provide sleeping accommodations and meals—Diopaga, Tapoa, Arly, and Porga—if prior arrangements are made with the Bureau of Tourism in Niamey. The best time to visit the reserve is during the cooler season (from November to March) when elephants, gazelles, lions, baboons, hippos, water buck, and other game visit the water holes along the river. The reserve can be reached by car in about 2 hours although you should overnight to be at the water holes by early light.

The Agadez oasis in the southern region of the Air Mountains offers a marked change of scenery and atmosphere from Niamey. It can be reached with some difficulty by car, preferably four-wheel drive, during the dry season. The excursion is usually by scheduled commercial airline. Agadez has two hotels and an encampment.

Ayorou has a large and colorful Sunday market and a new hotel-restaurant overlooking the river. A piroque can also be rented to go on the river to see hippos. Driving time from Niamey to Ayorou is about 3 hours. Outside of Niamey, on the road to Tillabery-Ayorou, giraffes can occasionally be seen.

You can drive to Gao (Mali), then take an interesting 2-day boat trip on the Niger River from Gao to Timbuktu and spend the night at a "campement." The boat goes on to Koulikoro, a town 100 kilometers (60 mi.) from Bamako, and stops at villages on the river. The Dogon area in southern Mali can be reached by an Air Mali flight from Niamey to Mopti. The Dogon people are noted for their fine sculptures and dancing. The Mopti Hotel has adequate lodging, and at Sangha, in the heart of the Dogon country, is a campement.

The Niamey Museum is considered one of the best in West Africa. Original and attractive in conception, it combines traditional exhibits with reproductions of villages of the major Nigerien ethnic groups and has artisans who work on village crafts (whose products can be bought in the Museum Gift Shop), a zoo, and an audiovisual center.

Fishing is possible in the Niger River, but the danger of bilharzia discourages many people from swimming and water skiing. Hunting is banned in Niger but is permitted in Upper Volta. For more than one half of the year, the Niger River is high enough for boating and there is enough wind for sailing.

Entertainment

One air-conditioned and two open-air movie theaters show European (mainly French), American, and Indian films. Non-French films are dubbed in French. Movie programs change daily. The Embassy is on the West African film circuit for mediocre American films which it receives sporadically.

The Franco-Nigerien Cultural Center has several activities a week, including films and occasional presentations of folk music, dancing, and performances by traveling troupes. The USICA Cultural Center occasionally sponsors programs of interest to the American community.

Niamey has several restaurants with French, Vietnamese, Russian, and Lebanese cuisine, and some snackbars with specialties, such as brochettes or hamburgers. Pizza is available at a local hotel. Several lively discotheques and an open-air nightclub with an African band provide the night life in Niamey.

Social Activities

Social life is informal and relaxed. Nigeriens are friendly albeit somewhat reserved socially. The resident diplomatic and international community is small and consists of personnel from the Embassies of Algeria, Belgium, Benin, Canada, China, Egypt, FRG, France, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, USSR, the US, and representatives of the UN agencies and other countries. Although Niger is a Muslim country, no special limitations exist for the foreign community regarding food, drink, or dress. Opportunities in Niamey to meet and associate with people are good—limited only by the interest and initiative of the individual and in many cases by the ability and willingness to speak French.

Calling cards are seldom needed by other than senior members of the post. One hundred cards is sufficient for most, except for the Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission. All-purpose invitation cards can be printed locally.

Clockwise from lower right: Tabaski, the practice of serving roasted lamb, is an important part of the Moslem religion; shop near the "Petite Marche," downtown Niamey; kitchenware; onions for sale; hot peppers, a basic ingredient in the local cuisine.

Notes For Travelers

GETTING TO THE POST

Personnel of all Agencies assigned to Niamey should write to the JAO Director immediately after they are notified of their assignment so briefing material can be sent to them.

Most personnel arrive in Niamey by plane, and usually come via Paris. Cable flight information and arrival time to the post well in advance of scheduled arrival. If you are not met at the airport, call the Embassy at 72-26-61 at any time, day or night.

Household Effects. The European Logistical Support Office (ELSO) in Antwerp, Belgium has been designated as the control office for shipment of household effects to and from Niamey. Shipments of household effects to Niamey will normally move by surface means to Antwerp and then by air cargo to post. This procedure is reversed for outbound shipments. Because of geographical proximity, or other relevant transportation reasons, certain occasions arise when direct shipment might be advantageous to the government. In such instances, origin posts should advise ELSO in advance about proposed alternative shipping methods, transit time, and cost, as compared with routing via ELSO facilities in Antwerp. Where circumstances warrant, ELSO will approve alternate routings.

Household effects which are physically routed through ELSO Antwerp and arrive by sea, should be consigned:

American Consulate General
(ELSO)
c/o A. G. Mar. Freyman & Van Loo N.V.
9-33 Cadixstraat
2000 Antwerp, Belgium

Vans or crates should be marked:

American Ambassador (owner's initials)
American Embassy
Niamey, Niger
via Antwerp (ELSO) in transit

Advise packers not to exceed standards for normal air van, 87" x 57" x 76" (220 cm. x 142 cm. x 76 cm.).

For each shipment routed through Antwerp, a complete set of shipping documents (original ocean bill of lading, copy of travel orders, and packing list) should be sent to ELSO by fastest reliable mail.

The international mail address for ELSO is:

American Consulate General
(ELSO)
129 Laarsebaan B.7
2006 Merksem, Belgium

Posts with APO/FPO facilities may wish to forward documents to the following address:

American Consulate General
(ELSO)
APO New York 09667

When a shipment departs post for Antwerp, a telegraphic pre-advice should be sent to ELSO in the following format:

Full name, Agency
Destination post
Number of pieces, gross weight
Carrier (vessel), waybill number (ocean B/L)
Point of arrival
Estimated date of arrival
Full fiscal data

Automobiles. Vehicles should be routed via Lome, Togo. The markings should be:

American Ambassador (owner's initials)
American Embassy
Niamey, Niger
Via American Embassy
Lome, Togo
in transit

Vehicles shipped to Lome may be transported by truck from Lome to Niamey. Employees desiring to drive their vehicles from the port to Niamey are encouraged to do so and are authorized to travel to Lome in accordance with 6 FAM 165.6. The interesting drive from Lome to Niamey takes 2 days.

Airfreight. Unaccompanied air baggage should be consigned:

American Ambassador (owner's initials)
American Embassy
Niamey, Niger

The post should be advised as far in advance as possible of the airway bill number, number of pieces, and the weight of the shipment. Under no circumstances should alcoholic beverages be included in this shipment. In addition to being contrary to shipping regulations, if discovered at the customs office it will result in considerable difficulty and delay in clearing the shipment. Please forward a complete packing list as soon as possible.

CUSTOMS, DUTIES, AND PASSAGE

Customs and Duties

Delays in customs clearances are avoided by strict adherence to the foregoing addressing and routing instructions. In particular, all airfreight shipped directly to Niamey must be addressed to the American Ambassador.

Passage

Valid entry visas are required for official personnel arriving in Niamey and can be obtained at any Nigerien or French consular post. Travelers arriving without valid visas will not be granted entry as airport visas no longer are obtainable. A valid WHO inoculation card is also necessary. Current instructions on vital inoculations can be obtained from the Department of State Medical Division, but employees should have valid cholera, yellow fever, and smallpox inoculations.

Pets

Pets arriving at post should have a valid rabies certificate and a certificate of good health.

FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION

Importation of firearms and ammunition is strictly forbidden by the laws of Niger.

CURRENCY, BANKING, AND WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

The local currency is the CFA (Communaute Financiere Africaine) franc, systematically pegged to the French franc at the rate of 50:1, and presently exchanged at 205 CFA to US$1. The same currency is used throughout former French West Africa except for Guinea and Mali. No restriction is placed on the amount of dollars that can be imported into Niger.

The Embassy budget and fiscal clerk provides accommodation exchange and cashes personal checks. A local checking account is not necessary, but a checking account in the US is advisable for paying bills and other transactions. Embassy payrolls are prepared in Paris by the Regional Administrative Management Center. Employees can have their checks sent directly to their US bank (which is advisable) or have them sent to Niamey. It takes about 6 weeks after arrival at post before pay and allowances are regularly received from Paris.

Weights and measures in Niger are based on the metric system. Temperatures are reported in Celsius. Niamey is 6 standard time zones ahead of New York City.

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

Adloff, Richard. *The French-Speaking Nations.* New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1969.

Afrique, Moyenne-Orient 79-80. Supplement to *Jeune Afrique.*

Atlas du Niger. Edited by Edmund Bernus, et al. Edition *Jeune Afrique,* 1980.

Chapelle, J. *Nomades Noirs du Sahara.* Paris: Plan, 1957.

Clarke, Thurston. *The Last Caravan.* 1978.

Crowder, Michael. *West Africa Under Colonial Rule.* Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968.

Dessain et Tolra. *l'Artisanat Creatur au Niger.* Paris: 1977.

Hargreaves, John D. *Prelude to the Partition of West Africa.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1963.

Howe, Russell W. *Black Africa.* 2 vols. New York: Walker, 1966.

Lloyd, Christopher. *The Search for the Niger.* London: Collins, 1973.

Maquet, Jacques. *Civilizations of Black Africa,* translated by Joan Rayfield. New York: Oxford University Press, 1972.

Morgenthau, Ruth Schachter. *Political Parties in French-Speaking West Africa.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964.

Sere de Rivieres, Edmond. *Histoire du Niger.* Paris: Berger Levrault, 1965. Second edition 1975.

Sidihou, A. H. and P. C. Charmard. *Geographie du Niger.* Dakar: 1975.

Trimingham, J. S. *Islam in West Africa.* London: Oxford University Press.

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